
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 24th, 2011

CONTACT: [Ryan Nickel](#) | (202) 225-3481

Norm Dicks' Statement on Subcommittee 302(b) Allocations

WASHINGTON- House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member, Rep. Norm Dicks gave the following statement during consideration of the Majority's Subcommittee 302(b) Allocations for FY2012:

"From the beginning of this Congress, my Democratic colleagues and I have warned: you can't balance the budget simply by cutting discretionary spending. The numbers don't work. Today we are considering 302(b) allocations for Fiscal Year 2012 that would, in my judgment, cause real harm to the economy and devastate programs that represent vital investments in people and infrastructure all across the nation. Yet, these cuts would do next to nothing to balance the budget.

"Our message has been amplified many times over in the past few months by the Bowles-Simpson Commission, the Rivlin-Domenici deficit reduction plan and by leading economists, including Dr. Kenneth Rogoff, who advised Senator John McCain's presidential campaign. Rogoff said earlier this month:

"You just can't do this overnight. If we tighten too fast, we would slam growth. The economy will implode on itself. We didn't get here in two years; we shouldn't try to get out of it in two years. And it's not just about cutting spending. The tax take needs to go up too." (AP, May 17,

2011)

“The Bowles-Simpson Commission issued a stern warning against ‘shocking the fragile economic recovery’ by enacting spending cuts too quickly. Alice Rivlin and Pete Domenici, chairing the Bipartisan Policy Center’s debt reduction task force, said if you cut too quickly more Americans will lose their jobs.

“All of these people are right, Mr. Chairman.

“But what are we doing today? We are considering spending levels in these 302(b) allocations that ignore all sensible advice ... that are dangerously inadequate to fund the needs of the nation, particularly at this time when tangible signs of economic recovery are apparent ... and that would reverse the recent gains in job growth. In the last three months the nation added more than three-quarters of a million private sector jobs, with last month marking the strongest job growth in the past five years. And we would be risking all of this by adopting the levels that the majority is proposing today. Already we have seen the employment impact that has taken place from enacted cuts and severe budget restraint at the state and local level – thousands of government and related jobs lost. Further and deeper cuts at the federal level will undoubtedly delay our nation’s economic recovery and will actually work against the efforts to reduce the deficit because of the diminished revenues coming into the Treasury.

“So I would say to the Chairman and my friends on the other side: This is not something you want to do. Causing real harm to people in need ... making it harder to get an education ... providing too little for law enforcement, for environmental protection and for homeland security ... and in doing so pushing recovery further into the future so balancing the budget will be harder to achieve.

“It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that these allocations, if implemented, would make it impossible to support the investments we as a nation need to make. The Homeland Security bill is a perfect example. Funding front-line federal personnel – CBP, ICE, TSA, Coast Guard and Secret Service – and adding needed funding for disaster relief, doesn’t leave enough to support our state and local partners, including the first responders who must react to terrorism threats and natural disasters.

“On the Energy and Water bill, the allocation is nearly \$6 billion below the President’s budget request and \$1 billion below the current year. In the context of historic flooding in the Mississippi River basin, an area that makes up 41 percent of the continental United States and encompasses all or part of 31 states, this allocation will probably mean inadequate funding to meet the nation’s needs. Several years ago we spent more federal money rebuilding one community, New Orleans, than we did in nearly three years on every other water project in the country because we had not made the proper initial investments. With this allocation, we continue down that path, having learned nothing from the tragedy.

“Approximately half of the Energy and Water bill is defense related, including the nuclear weapons program and non-proliferation activities. Given instability in the Middle East and elsewhere, these programs are more important than ever. At this allocation, we may not be able to provide the level of national security we need.

“The Labor, HHS, Education bill will be cut by \$18.2 billion below last year and \$41.6 billion below the request level. This represents not a return to FY 2008 levels but a return to FY 2004 levels. Pell grants, Head Start, NIH all would face disturbing cuts.

“The Transportation/HUD bill and the Agriculture bill will each be cut by more than 13 percent below last year’s level. The Commerce, Justice, Science bill faces deep cuts also, despite the need to increase funding for FBI, federal prisons and detention, and restore funding for weather satellites or risk a gap in weather data.

“In 2006, the Bush Administration committed to double the funding for certain science investments over a period of seven years. The Obama Administration renewed that commitment; for the first time, we in Congress fell off track in last year’s bill and I am concerned that this allocation will only take us farther off-track.

“I appreciate and completely support Chairman Rogers’ commitment to regular order in committee and on the floor. I renew my pledge to provide whatever procedural support the minority can offer. However, when the starting point is an unrealistic and dangerous allocation, I fear that we cannot complete the process. At these numbers, many of these bills will be extremely difficult to pass in the House and impossible to pass in the Senate or be signed into law. I cannot support this allocation and urge a NO vote.”

###